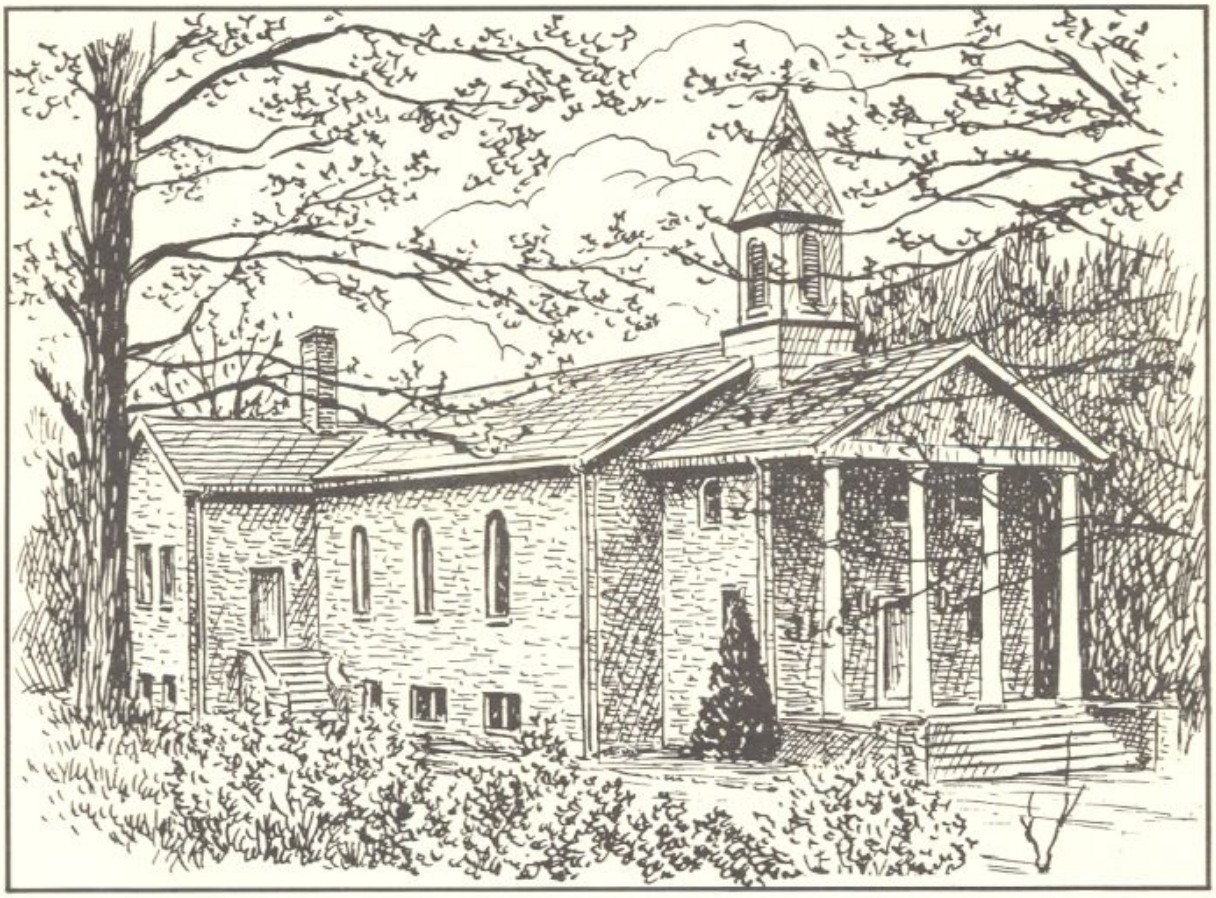
RESTORATION REVIEW



BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN BROTHERS DWELL IN UNITY!

IT IS LIKE PRECIOUS OIL UPON THE HEAD. (*Psalms* 133)

(*Pictured is Hopwood Christian Church, established in* 1834, *at Milligan, Tenn.*)

See "The Spirit of Milligan", page 122.

Volume 9, No. 7 **September, 1967**

Volume 9, No. 7 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **September 1967**

THE SPIRIT OF MILLIGAN

Milligan College, nestled in the foothills of the Appalachians, hosted the Second Annual Unity Forum, June 23-26. The first such forum was conducted at Bethany College as part of the celebration of the centennial of Alexander Campbell's death. The Milligan forum was also a centennial celebration, honoring the college's first century. The Third Annual Unity Forum will be held next summer at Southeastern Christian College in Winchester, Kentucky.

While it is not a hard and fast rule, these forums are intended especially for educators among all the various groups of the Restoration Movement. For this reason most of the participants are from the Christian colleges or state universities, or they are editors or publishers. Those leaders among us who are giving their lives to teaching and writing need to know each other, and to have at least one forum where they can quietly and freely express their views.

The Milligan forum, like Bethany before it, was blessed with outstanding representation from all our wings. From the Disciples there were Dr. Howard Short, editor of *The Christian* in St. Louis; Dr. Lawrence Kirkpatrick, secretary for the World Convention of Churches of Christ in New York; Farrell Walters, director of church relations, Bethany College; Dr. Richard Pope, Lexington Christian Seminary.

Independent Christian C h u r c h e s were represented on the program by Dr. Robert Fife, professor, Milligan College; Dr. Dean Walker, president of Milligan College; A. Dale Crain, Capitol City Christian Church, Lincoln, Neb.; Orvel Crowder, Hopwood Christian Church, Milligan College, Tenn.; and Kenneth Norris, president of Maritime Christian College, Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Churches of Christ always have a larger proportion of representation at these gatherings since we have greater fragmentation. From the non-class brethren was Dr. Thomas Langford, professor, Texas Tech University; from the conservative Church of Christ was Charles Holt, editor of *The Sentinel* in Lufkin, Texas; from the premillennial wing was Lavern Houtz, president of Southeastern Christian College, Winchester, Ky.;

from the mainline churches were Dr. Carroll Ellis, professor, David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Dr. David Stewart, publisher, Sweet Co., Austin, Texas; and Richard E. Smith, El Centro College, Dallas, Texas.

Dr. Robert Meyers, professor at Friends University and minister of Riverside Church in Wichita Kan., was scheduled to be on the program, and when he could not make it, Prof. Leroy Garrett, Texas Woman's University, Denton, filled in for him.

The program was planned by Farrell Walters of Bethany, Charles Gresham of Milligan, and Leroy Garrett, with each man arranging for representation of those in his own background. These men alternated in presiding over all sessions.

Besides the Milligan College family itself, from whom the forum received considerable support, there were some 50 visitors to the campus for the occasion. In future years these gatherings will probably become much larger, but we believe something important is to be gained from the smaller forums such as Bethany and Milligan. In these meetings nearly everyone is a participant; everyone is in on the dialogue. Discussions continue right on into the dining room, where everyone eats together, and by making the effort one can manage to sit at a table with every brother present at the forum at least once. We hope we do not lose this intimate atmosphere as the forum grows from year to year.

The theme of the forum was "Renewal through Recovery," defined by President Walker as a renewal by the Spirit, not a *self*-renewal He pointed out that we are to "recover" the mind of Christ for His church. "To renew the Church, one must recover the centrality of the fact, and the meaning of the event, of God's revelation of Himself in Jesus, the only begotten Son. As Christ made visible the invisible God, so the Church makes known and visible the presently invisible Christ, who not only speaks, but is, the Word of God." While President Walker emphasized a recovery of an understanding of the church as the means to renewal, Lawrence Kirkpatrick pointed to the Lord's Supper as central to our renewal, while Dick Smith underscored a deeper appreciation of brotherhood.

Carroll Ellis, in a loving and brotherly spirit, spoke on the validity of the Restoration Movement, explaining that he believed the Churches of Christ had preserved the ideals of the pioneers more than the other Restoration groups. He appeared to equate the Restoration Movement with the Churches of Christ.

In response to brother Ellis, Howard Short entertained all of us by numerous quotations from various journals published by all segments of our Movement, which revealed that each faction supposed itself to be the true church, while all others were less than perfect. His point was to show that truth is not always so easy to come by, and that it is easy for us to presume too much. We hope we may publish his remarks in a forthcoming issue of this journal, for they are so relevant to the problems we face in trying to understand each other.

Thomas Langford touched all our hearts as he spoke sympathetically about the problem of arousing a greater concern for unity among the non-class brethren. While he has hope, he is a realist about the severity of the difficulties. He sees progress in the fact that "the age of debating" is passing, and in the fact that ministers show more concern for vital issues. Tom is good for any such forum, for there he stands before you, magnificently sincere, a young Ph.D. from a respected university, and one who chooses to stay and work with the brethren he's always known and loved. His presence also serves to show that an intelligent, promising, young scholar (he was on his way to Washington to study for a year with the Office of Education) may hold views that the rest of us thought only fanatics and crackpots believed. Once you hear Tom Langford speak (and he never equivocates in taking his stand against the class system) you conclude that maybe there is something to the anti-Sunday School position after all. And of course there is!

But Thomas Langford makes it clear that he loves you and accepts you as a brother even while differing with you. He may let you have your classes, if you choose to be unscriptural!, but he'll not let you walk out of the circle of his love. Such was the spirit of Milligan.

Another brother whose name I have listed in this report, but whom I will not identify in this context, referred to the many debates he had had up and down the country. But now he conceded that he was in no humor to debate, but rather to enjoy his brothers in Christ and to reason with them in love. It was his first experience at such a gathering, and his presence was hazardous in view of party politics, but he showed every sign of enjoying his freedom, so much so that he is not likely ever to turn back to that land where the lamp of brotherhood is not allowed to burn. While most of the forum probably disagreed with the thesis he presented, they all loved him for his simple faith and appreciated him for being a free man in Christ. Such was the spirit of Milligan.

At one of the sessions six brethren, representing six of our divisions in the Restoration Movement, spoke on the problems and possibilities of fellowship in his particular party. This within itself demonstrated that the Holy Spirit is doing wonderful things with us throughout our larger brotherhood. It demonstrated that no one or two men started this, and it showed that *now* an entire army of demons cannot stop it. It is God's work and He shall give us the victory. Such was the spirit of Milligan.

As at Bethany so was it at Milligan. The most meaningful experience of all was when we sat together around the Lord's table with brethren from all three of our major wings, addressing us. The three brethren themselves were most divergent in their theology (their *opinions,* that is), but they were one in Christ and in their love for Christ. So were we all. The brethren at Milligan, as at Bethany, were so gracious that they did not use the organ at this service. A Christian Church brother led the singing with out the instrument. We sang together, prayed together, honored Christ together. The speakers drew upon their own

experiences as they referred to the Bible, the Lord's Supper, and brotherhood as the means of our working together.

In this moment unity wasn't something yet to be realized. We were enjoying it then and there. This was the oneness for which our Lord prayed. Why can't it be like that everywhere, even amidst all our diversity?

Such was the spirit of Milligan!

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

IN A BROKEN-DOWN AMBULANCE IN DALLAS

After it was all over I asked my wife Ouida why it is that my unusual experiences seem always to be *so* unusual. She wasn't sure. The answer must be that it is difficult for me to learn the lessons God seeks to teach me. Perhaps He adds intensity to the experience so that I will get the point. Anyway, here is what happened.

It was a very warm Saturday in July, and I had agreed to help Ouida shop for a new rug and to help our boys at their turn in mowing the lawn at Wynnewood Chapel. We also needed to fumigate our rental property against roaches. So off we went to Dallas.

"Shopping with Ouida is always an experience within itself. Since it was a rug she wanted this time, I was conditioned to the fact that we'd have to attend every carpet sale and bargain store in Dallas. It wasn't long until all the rugs began to look alike to me, and I was soon weary of it all. But she stayed with it, store after store, until she found just what she wanted at the price she wanted to pay. Bless her, she has courage I'll never have. When they tell me a rug is on sale for $4.95 per square yard, I'm likely to say, "That's all right. I'll give you $5.95!" When a salesman makes a deal with Ouida, he deserves whatever profit there may be.

Once she bought the carpet she wanted, I was convinced that we had found the proverbial needle in the haystack. That gave me a new surge of energy and restored my lagging faith, so we were off to our second assignment. It was now the hottest part of the day, but we proceeded to mow the large lawn at the Chapel anyhow. Even though I was only helping the others, I still overdid it and got too hot. But after a short rest I left the others to finish at the Chapel while I went to our rented duplex, where we once lived, to declare war on the roaches. With the spraying equipment I had rented I was soon on my way around the house, laying down a path of death for the pests that were annoying my renters.

Then it happened. I felt myself growing weak . . . then weaker. I was soon so ill that I had to lie down where I was. I crawled to some grass in the shade where it was only 100 degrees. I was nauseated and so sick that all I could do was whisper "Lord, help me!" I

was soon as limp as a dish rag and barely conscious. But I was aware of crawling within range of my renter's very friendly hound, kept tied to restrain his enthusiasm. The dog gleefully licked every square inch of exposed flesh (Ouida explains that he was after the salt!), and then he proceeded to lie down on top of me. I am not so sure but what he also used me for a fireplug before it was all over, but at any rate I was in no condition to pay him much mind, even if maybe the hound's attention was an angelic visitation.

But the dog was doing more than the neighbors, and I had begun to think that I would have to die alone if I were going to die. My renter told me later that she was frightened and didn't know what to do. After some 15 minutes a next door neighbor came over, one of my former renters, and offered to help me into his air-conditioned home. Despite his more than usual size, he was unable to move me, for I could help him not the slightest. When I started convulsing and vomiting, he feared I might be dying, so they finally decided to call an ambulance. In the meantime I had managed to whisper instructions to the neighbor to take my address book and call L. M. Roberts, my nearest friend and an elder at Wynnewood Chapel.

Lucille Roberts was at my side in a matter of minutes, and while I never saw her, I did hear her voice and felt her hands as she ministered with a cool towel, beseeching as only a loving sister can, "Leroy, what's wrong with you?" I could have wept and no doubt would have had I had the strength.

I was still conscious enough to hear the whine of the ambulance as it made its way across west Oak Cliff. I thought of one of my neighbors in Denton, who recently fell on the grass while mowing his lawn and didn't live to get to the hospital. But I was too exhausted to generate much feeling about death or anything else, though I didn't really think I was dying.

I wanted to make the most of my first ambulance ride, so I watched familiar places pass in quick succession, for I could identify every single block all the way to the hospital. And then it happened—believe it or not—the ambulance broke down!

It sounded as if we had lost all four wheels at the same time when the motor exploded. I mustered enough energy to be scared out of my wits, and had I been a fatalist I would have concluded that it just wasn't intended that I live through the day. If it had happened when I knew less about the grace of God, which is not too long ago, I would have sworn that the devil was after me sure enough!

Whoever heard of an ambulance breaking down like that! There I was hardly two blocks from my parents' old place, roasting in a broken-down ambulance, with the attendants frantically using their two-way radio in an effort to get another ambulance. Earlier I was ready to weep, but now I wanted the energy to laugh. It all seemed so sublimely ridiculous.

L. M. Roberts had by this time responded to the emergency and had caught up with the ambulance. He came around and stuck his head inside the oven-like ambulance to see if I were dead or alive. By now I was feeling embarrassed, as well as hot.

As we waited for help to come I heard one of the attendants say that he had been expecting that to happen. I was thinking how morally irresponsible it is for an establishment to take chances with people's lives with an ambulance that is likely to break down anytime. People get sued for less than that! What if I had been dying?

Finally another ambulance arrives and I am transferred from one to the other, this one being air-conditioned, and on our way we go. But the stretcher of the *first* ambulance didn't fit the bed of the second, so they had to leave the back window down and let my feet dangle out the back!

Anyone who has read Manchester's *Death of a President is* aware of the comedy of errors that can take place at a Dallas hospital—or any hospital for that matter. Though I was taken to Methodist Hospital and not to the now world renowned Parkland Hospital, I was soon to realize that hospitals must have a way of reflecting the comic element of life, especially emergency rooms.

The ambulance driver had to give me a bill for that wild trip that I had to the hospital in relays. Since I was still void of enough energy to speak, I directed him to my wallet for the information he wanted. I was dressed like a tramp and my wallet had in it not even one dollar. They soon learned that I had no insurance, and since I was picked up in a section of the city that is rapidly being taken over by poor Latin Americans, they must have figured that I would be a charity case.

I had managed enough words to tell the driver my occupation and where I worked, for I had begun to fear that they just might let me die, in case I *were* dying, if I had no money to pay. I knew that for some reason I was slow getting attention. A nurse came by and asked the driver about me. "Texas Woman's University?" she responded, supposing me to be unconscious. "Does he work for them?" she further asked, as if she figured I might not work for anyone. "He's a professor there," said the driver. "A professor!" the nurse exclaimed, and I suppose she was looking at me in disbelief. "Well, that's what he *said,*" replied the driver as he stuffed a bill in my shirt pocket and walked out.

By this time my family had been alerted, and one of my brothers had driven from his home in Arlington, 20 miles away. Friends had fetched Ouida and she had arrived. Still the hospital had given me no attention! I began to think that the emergency room of a hospital is no place to be if you are in any danger.

Finally I began to gain some strength, and, concluding that my illness was only a sun stroke, decided to return to Denton for medical treatment, if any proved necessary. The nurse thought a doctor should see me first. So I rested a while longer. The doctor, a woman, was satisfied that I could return home, if I wished, and when she advised me not

to go back out into the sun and work, I concluded that I must have looked not only like a pauper, but stupid as well.

To the extent that I felt like it I had already begun to laugh at the whole thing as Ouida drove us home. But our family physician did not take it so lightly, for when he had examined me and heard the story, he diagnosed the trouble as heat exhaustion and assured me that I was in danger while lying in the grass. Then I got scared! He fed me sodium chloride intravenously in order to restore the chemical balance of the blood, explaining that I collapsed from lack of sufficient oxygen to the brain.

My doctor was right when he said I'd be "out of gas" for a few days, but I am all right, thank God, and did not even have to miss any work. But I understand that I'll have to watch out for the sun more in the future than I have in the past—as if I didn't have enough things to watch out for already.

Believing as I do that God is constantly at work teaching us in all life's experiences, I have evaluated this episode with this in mind. *What is God saying to me in such an experience?* I have asked myself. *What might there be in my life that He would seek to purge through such discipline?*

"Endure what you suffer as being a father's punishment; because your suffering shows that God is treating you as his sons . . . Our human fathers punished us for a short time, as it seemed right to them. But God does it for our own good, so that we may share his holiness." (Heb. 12:7, 10)

The experience made me even more aware of the frailty and fragmentariness of our lives, and of how dependent we are upon Him in whom we have our very being. It made me conscious of my pride. I recall Alexander Campbell's statement about the two things that impressed him more and more as he grew older: the frailty of man and the grandeur of God.

I realize that my work among the churches and through *Restoration Review* are effective means used of the Lord to combat my pride, and if it were not for these ego-deflating efforts I suppose my case would be impossible.

Now when I am tempted to behave like a sophisticated professor and glory in self-sufficiency, I can very vividly see myself sprawled out on the grass, utterly helpless, licked by an old hound and anointed with canine balm, all while in pursuit of cockroaches. And that ought to humble anybody! It puts one more in the class with old Lazarus, which is where most of us should be, for we are but stewards of God's bounties.

Such experiences also teach me that we should not discount the comic aspect of life. Indeed, life is serious, but it is also often hilarious. If we can bring ourselves to the place that we can give ourselves the old horse laugh over a lot of things that happen, we may be more philosophically equipped for the more serious moments. People are funny and life is amusing, but the heart of the comedy should always be an honest look at ourselves.

Something has gone wrong when life loses its laughter, especially the ability to laugh at ourselves.

The Lord provides me with reserves to draw upon. When I am inclined to take myself too seriously or to make too much of unimportant matters, I can think of myself in that broken-down ambulance, with the dignified L. M. Roberts sticking his head through the window trying to find me! Or see myself dashing madly down Bishop Street, siren wailing, with my feet dangling out the back door!

Life is delightfully exciting, isn't it? Thank God for its comic touch!

But there's one other thing. There is in life those *little things* that seem to appear only in the more intensive experiences, whether tragic or comic, or both, or maybe we only see them then.

My Mexican neighbor awkwardly holding my head in his big hands (though he should have let it lie) was one of those touching little things one remembers and which renews his faith in the basic goodness of man. Lucille Roberts I have always loved as a dear sister in the Lord, but she means even more to me now, all because of little things like a kindly, reassuring voice and the touch of the hand.

Then there is my little Benjy, who was with his mother on that uncertain trip to the hospital, who insisted on telling jokes while his mother was urging him to pray for his daddy. Ouida couldn't understand such behavior, but I explained to her that the little fellow was also desperate inside himself, and turned to joke-telling in an effort to endure the ordeal. He simply didn't have the emotional maturity to pray at a time like that.

Then there was Ouida. That night we laughed and laughed, as much as energy would allow, about some of the things that had happened, and especially about that friendly hound. Then she reminded me that it could have been serious and that she was thankful that we were still together. She revealed that on the way to the hospital, after the frantic report that I had suffered a stroke, that she prayed to our God: "Dear Lord, don't let Leroy die, for he has so many things to do yet."

That touched the bottom of my heart, and that "little thing" was worth the whole experience, including the neurotic dog and the broken-down ambulance.

Yes, there is much I have to do and many miles to travel.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

Things That Matter Most. . . No.7

THAT 'LOVE AND TRUST STUFF'

ROBERT MEYERS

Some things astonish us by their loveliness, some by their ugliness. It is more pleasant to be thrilled by the beautiful than to be shocked by the hideous, so I actively seek the delightful. But occasionally I turn a corner or open a page and find ugliness without intending to. This has just happened to me in reading a bulletin written by a minister I know.

My friend, who would succor a victim on the Jericho road, who loves his wife and kids, who talks and smiles charmingly in the living room, writes bitterly of the premillennialists among us. He says they failed to change the church (i.e., the Church of Christ) by debates, but they are now making great progress "by injecting this 'love and trust stuff' into people . . ."

That is an unbelievable phrase. It has to be seen in print to be credited as possible from a twentieth century pen. If one said, without proof, that people still write this way in religious journals, he would be accused of gross exaggeration. Yet I have just read it, soberly printed and mailed out for reading.

I date back far enough to recall vividly the great premillennial controversies in the Church of Christ. I bought all the books and debates on the subject I could find, and I followed Foy Wallace, Jr., around ardently as he fired his heavy artillery at the pre-mills. Later I, the little imitator, fired away at them too, with my BB gun.

I didn't know any of them, but that made no difference. In fact, it helped, for when one is attacking as I was, it is best not to know people as people. It was years before I got to know some of them personally and had enough time and sense to listen to them. I was not able to agree with their views, but I found them gentle, good people who disliked public controversy. In my own experience they were more often than not pushed and provoked into debate.

But be that as it may, I am most profoundly shocked by the contemptuous dismissal of some of their present-day editors as men who go for this 'love and trust stuff'. It seems to me that a man may as well scoff at 'this gospel stuff, this Jesus jazz, this cross bit'. For when one speaks scornfully of love and trust, belittling men's intentions and refusing to open his own heart to their overtures, he blasphemes the very heart of Christianity. If there is heresy, surely this is it.

When he has finished with his denunciation of the 'love and trust stuff', my friend makes judgments about the religious world around him. He says:

"The denominations love the Lord also, according to this (premillennial) editor. I deny it—for Jesus said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments'. They do not keep the commands of Christ and therefore do not love the Lord and I wonder just how much liberalism and premillennialism love the Lord today by the way they trod (sic) under their unholy feet the authority of Christ revealed in his word. Beware fellow Christians—premillennialism is not dead, it is simply coming in through another door."

Poor frightened soul! He has dedicated himself to battling demons and ghosts and things that go bump in the night. He is filled with fears that his doctrine will be corrupted. He sees a hostile world menacing him on every hand. He stirs up his brethren to fear, to hold spear-point at the ready. What a way to live!

We have often been called paranoid, we people of the Church of Christ, and we have resented it, naturally. It is only in recent years that we have been able to speak with much kindness of psychologists and then usually only when they are faculty members of our schools. But perhaps their judgment was not altogether wrong. Paranoia is a form of mental disorder in which the victim feels persecuted and in danger, despite the fact that to others around him no obvious danger can be discerned.

Often the disease has no marked effect on the rest of the personality. A paranoid can be thoroughly charming in all the rooms of his house except one. But if you turn the door handle to that one, dark gloom rushes out and strange, distorted shapes are seen swimming in the murk.

So the pre-mills, as we jocularly called them, are coming through another door. What a gruesome prospect that is. It blots out such minor worries as secularism, population explosions, hunger, war, man's immemorial hatreds, the H-bomb, and religious liberals. Nasser thinks *he* has problems! He should have to face the prospect of being infiltrated by premillennialists talking that 'love and trust stuff'.

And if that isn't enough, up jumps the old bugaboo of "the denominations." There in the dark they lurk, fearsomely, with their monstrous faces and their malevolent intentions. I recall how we grew up at home with this scare-word on our lips constantly. We were The Church; everybody else was in Denominations; and Denominations were Awful. We were paranoid, all right. We thought everyone in town was against us but we could hold out, for Christ's sake and the gospel's. The truth was that they weren't even thinking about us, but I suspect that fact would have been too much for us to bear.

How long shall we have to wait before our Bible professors start sending their students to the dictionary to find out what the word "denomination" means? It is time to turn the floodlight on this particular goblin and show all the children that it is only a tattered sheet waving in the night wind. The simple truth is that the word means a thing, person, or group which is denominated, or named. And if the Church of Christ is not named—on signs, in literature, on legal documents, in advertising, on the monthly invoices—then the moon is made of green cheese nibbled by little three-headed mice.

We are informed that these denominational people do not love the Lord because they do not keep his commands. The implication is that we in The Church do. But the bleak truth is that when we speak of keeping the commands, we ordinarily mean a selected group which we have decided are important. Others we overlook on the basis that they are not binding today, or were only customs, or were meant to be understood figuratively.

Such confidence is staggering. This man blithely charges that all the rest of the religious world lies when it claims to love the Lord. Only he and his brethren love the Lord. And not many of them, for a premillennialist is always popping up here, a liberal there, a Herald of Truth supporter yonder, to spoil the wondrous harmony of the Elect. There is, finally, only one end to this line of thought: the only man who *really* loves the Lord is me, for I understand and keep all his commands—at least all that matter.

Then comes the final warning that we should beware of the insidious premills who are coming to get us. They were not really stomped to death by Foy and his boys (I was one, may God forgive me). They survived that bloody pounding, we being less invincible than we thought, and are now trying to sneak in by another door-the 'love and trust stuff' door.

I suppose my friend sees them everywhere, their feet half through the windows, their evil eyes counting the orthodox souls they will soon corrupt. He hears them say they want "love and trust" to prevail everywhere and that they accept him as a beloved brother in Christ, but he knows they are only covering a sinister plot to undo him and his faithful band. So he rejects them.

How very sad it all is, but yet how instructive. For this is the paranoid world many of us came out of, and it is necessary, occasionally, that we revisit it just to be sure we know how to prize our freedom.

Remembering premillennialists I have known over the past twenty-five years, and thinking at this moment of an especially wonderful family here at Riverside who grew up with this persuasion and among these godly people, I am moved to issue this invitation: if there are some premillennialists around who want to slip into Riverside and bring that "love and trust stuff" with them, will they please write at once? Better still, call collect.

We need you, brothers in the lord. We may not agree with your interpretations (we are free man, we often disagree with one another), but we most desperately yearn for more of that "love and trust stuff."

The doors are open to you. And the windows. We'll even knock down a wall if you have a regiment on the way. We will take our chances with your literalistic interpretation of *Revelation* 20. We figure we may get by with the good lord even if we should go honestly astray on that point, but the love and trust stuff we absolutely must have.—*Wichita State University*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

FREEDOM?

JAMES D. BALES

Although Robert Meyers called attention to some of the charges made by G. C. Brewer concerning Carl Etter (*Voices,* 111-12) in "*As* Touching Those Who Were Once Enlightened," Meyers may not have noticed how free Etter was with certain charges concerning the church *(Voices,* 104-109). The wonder is not that he was denied fellowship by the church, but that he should have wanted its fellowship.

Freedoms That Christ Brings

Christ brings us freedom through truth (John 8:32). Where is this truth found? It is the word of Christ (John 8:31). This word received He from the Father (John 17:8). Thus it is the word by which we shall be judged (John 12:38-52). His word is the truth in which we are sanctified (John 17:17). In speaking of the apostles Jesus said that He had given them the word (John 17:6-8).

The words of the apostles are Christ's words, for He sent them, and to receive those whom Christ sent is to receive Christ (John 17:6-8, 18; 13:20). Our treatment of His word is related to our treatment of Him (John 14:23-24).

How were they to remember His word? By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit they were to have brought to their remembrance all that Jesus taught (John 14:26). We might desire an inspired recollection of all that Jesus taught, but we were not there to be taught by Him, and this promise was not to us. That knowledge must come through *perspiration* and not *inspiration.* We know nothing about what Christ taught except through what the Spirit taught through inspired men. Although the promise of John 14:26 was to the apostles, other passages show that there were other men who were inspired by the Spirit (Eph. 2:20). They were not to teach just part of the truth, for the Spirit was to teach them "all things" (John 14:26), which included things which Jesus had not taught them.

We do not have inspired apostles and prophets today, but the written word of inspired men is as authoritative as their spoken word (2 Thess. 2:15). To have the word of inspired men is to have them, and to listen to their word is to listen to their voice (Lk. 16:29; Acts 13:27). The written word is not only the voice of the prophet (Acts 13:27), but it is the voice of God (Matt. 22:31) and the testimony of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 10:15). It has the power to produce faith and to instruct us (John 17:20, Eph.3:3-4).

Modernism assumes that "all the truth" was not revealed to the apostles and prophets in the first century. To this we say:

1. How can they claim to love Christ and to be loyal to Him when they discredit His promise that certain men would be guided into all truth? While they claim to be disciples of Christ, they try to make Christ their disciple and to teach Him that He was wrong. Etter (p. 109) criticizes our "backward look in religion" and thinks that the fruits of modern scholarship in religion goes beyond what is found in the Bible. Yet if Jesus is the truth, His promise that the apostles would be guided into all the truth was fulfilled before the last one

of them died. Therefore, it is necessary for us to take the backward look to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

2. All the truth has been delivered, for the promise of Jesus Christ did not fail. We invite Etter and Other modernists to state one moral and spiritual truth which is not found in the Word of God. If he will list some of the new truths which he thinks he has, we are convinced that it can be shown that either (a) they are found in the Bible, (b) they are discernible through human reason, (c) they are condemned by the Bible, or (d) they are condemned by human reason.

Knowledge of the truth make us free (John 8:32). This knowledge is more than an intellectual grasp, for it involves obedience. We have been begotten again by the word of God (1 Pet. 1:23, Jas. 1:18). This involves our obedience for "ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeined love of the brethren" (1 Pet. 1:22). Knowledge of truth involves the practice of truth, and thus the abiding in Christ's word (1 John 2:3-4, John 8:31).

It should be obvious that no one has a perfect grasp of "all the truth," much less a perfect practice of it. There is room for growth for "as new born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (1 Pet. 2:2). Some have not grown and need to be fed milk when they ought to be eating meat. This is not a healthy situation, and in *Hebrews* the exhortation to go on to maturity is followed by a warning concerning those who had totally fallen away (Heb. 6:1-6).

Since no one perfectly understands or practices "all the truth," it is clear that God must overlook some things in order for anyone to be saved. How much he will overlook is not mine to know, and I am happy that I must leave this to the Judge of all the earth. This does not mean, however, that I should be presumptuous and neglect my obligation to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18).

The truth is not, however, a cold and impersonal system, but it is centered in Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6) . He makes us free: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:31, 36). Our freedom is therefore in Christ and in His living word, not in an impersonal system of abstract truth.

Free from the Law of Sin and Death

Christ has freed us from the law of merit, under which we would have to earn our salvation. If we were under such a law, we would have to do *all* God requires and do it *all of the time* (Gal. 3:10). If we did this, we could boast in our work and would deserve the reward of wages (Rom. 3:27,4:4). But no one has lived the perfect life, for all have sinned and fallen short (Rom. 3:9). We do not have to transgress all the laws all the time in order

to be condemned by the law (Jas. 2:9-11). If we are to be saved it must be on some basis other than merit-on some basis other than doing all the law says and doing it all the time.

The way is provided through the blood of Jesus Christ and the grace of God (Rom. 3:21-26). We are to have an obedient faith (Rom. 16:26), but even the acts of faith do not merit salvation. They draw their value from the fact that they are God's way of salvation and related to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus *in Christ* we are not under condemnation (Rom. 8:1-4).

We are free from the domination of sin since we are under grace instead of law (Rom. 6:14). But this does not mean that the Christian is not under law in any sense, for, if this were the case, it would not be possible for him to do wrong. Sin is said to be a transgression of *utw* (1 John 3:4). We are said to be under law to Christ (1 Cor. 9:21). So we are free from sin and not under the dominion of law in that we are not under the law of merit.

If we were under such law, then once we sinned we would be in bondage to sin without any hope of escape. But God in his mercy made provision for our forgiveness. Being free of sin's dominion does not mean, of course, that we are free of temptation or that we cannot go back into the bondage of sin. It means that through God's mercy we have escaped and that we can remain free so long as we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

Free Within the Bounds of the Gospel

We are thus made free of the law and are not to go back to the law. "For freedom did Christ set us free. Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). Jews who obeyed the gospel were made dead to the law, and Jews and Gentiles alike are made dead to the principle of justification on the basis of merit. But we are made free from such bondage that we may be joined to Christ and bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:1-7). We are not free to bring forth just any kind of fruit, but fruit which is consistent to our relationship to Christ.

Freedom does not give us license to serve the flesh (Gal. 5:13). Nor are we free from the demands of the law of love, even if we cannot attain perfect love. If we were able to keep the law of love perfectly, we would then be earning our salvation. But no man has done such. So we are obligated to the ethical requirements that are summed up in the law of love (Rom. 13:8-10) . We are on a higher plane than were the Jews in regard to moral responsibility, for Christ revealed a higher standard of love (John 13:34-35).

Although we are responsible for some minute regulations, we are free from the multiplicity of minute requirement of the law of Moses. This does not mean, however, that we are less responsible to God. In fact we are under greater responsibility. Some want a detailed list of all that is required of them so that they can check them off once they have

been performed, and thus feel that they have arrived. This spares them from having to think about such things.

The truth is that much of our life is regulated by principles, such as the golden rule, which may be referred to as the *law of love* for our fellow man. One has to think in order to make proper use of the golden rule in the various situations of life.

As Richard Whateley has said:

> Hardly any restraint is so irksome to man as to be left to his own discretion, yet still required to regulate his conduct according to certain principles, and to steer his course through the intricate channels of life, with a constant vigilant exercise of his moral judgment. It is much more agreeable to human indolence (though at first sight the contrary might be supposed) to have a complete system of laws laid down, which are to be observed according to the letter, not to the spirit; and which, as long as a man adheres to them, affords both a consolatry assurance of safety, and an unrestrained liberty as to every point not determined by them; than be called upon for incessant watchfulness-careful and candid self-examination-and studious cultivation of certain moral dispositions.

Wherein the gospel has left us free it has not left us free from the law of love, so that we might use our knowledge to lead people into sin. Paul condemned eating meat in an idol's temple on two grounds. It was a violation of the law of love (1 Cor. 8), and it was wrong to commune with demons who were represented by the idols (1 Cor. 10). In the home, *if* the meat was not in the context of a feast to an idol, the meat could be eaten.

Although we are free from Old Testament ritual, and under the system of worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:20-24), we are not free to go back to the Old Testament temple and serve it (Heb. 13:10-16) . We are not free to add to New Testament worship. For example, our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper at the time of the passover meal, but he instituted the supper and not the meal. And the apostle Paul showed that we do not have the authority to introduce into the assembly a meal along with the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11).

These then are some of the things involved in the Christian's freedom. However, we are not free, as Etter thinks we are, to (1) use the so-called scientific approach in religion to discredit certain doctrines taught in the Bible (p. 106), and (2) to bring various innovations into worship (p. 107), and (3) to establish our own standards of fellowship, as some have done in making fellowship too narrow and some in making it too broad. Etter wanted us to fellowship him in his modernism (p. 109). Some of us may need to expand and some of us may need to contract our position concerning fellowship, (4) To denounce the revelation of God in the Old Testament with reference to certain of the Old Testament wars (p. 108).

There is Biblical "unity in diversity," for Christians are certainly at different stages of growth and development. But there is not room to include in this unity the modernism of Etter. And if we ever become convinced that the Bible is not inspired of God, as it claims to be, there will be no fellowship of "unity in diversity," because without the divine revelation we could not maintain that there is any fellowship in which men ought to receive one another.—*Harding College, Searcy, Ark*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

ALL TRUTH AND DR. BALES

CARL L. ETTER

"As surely as Jesus is the Son of God, all truth was delivered by the time the last Apostle dies." So says Dr. James D. Bales, who surely possesses all truth.

Perhaps he can give us some answers. What is electricity? Where is the edge of the universe? How do plants synthesize sunlight? When will the world's population get enough to eat?

Sorry, but no one can claim all truth. This is an age of unparalleled curiosity and discovery, a time in which information doubles every ten years, an era where the explosion of knowledge reveals how much is yet to be learned.

Unlike Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Bales believes that all truth has been delivered. Sir Isaac felt like a little boy playing on the beach, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before him. Dr. Bales cannot hear Epictetus, who advised: "It is impossible for anyone to learn what he thinks he already knows."

Most mass movements create true believers—followers who never question because all truth has been given to them. Consider Japan's recent masters. They drove their people into a fruitless war, propagandizing them with the ideas that their race came from heaven, that they were led by a deity, that the wind gods had always protected them in battle. The Land of the Rising Sun would never suffer defeat. They were infallible.

So was the Third Reich, according to Hitler. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, do not question the omnipotence of Marxist doctrine. Meanwhile, the Catholics believe their popes have handed down all truth. Yet the source of all truth for the primitive is his witch doctor. Man's chronicle is that of groups which thought their's to be the only true doctrine. They have risen and fallen, but only the quest for truth has endured.

Christian theologians have butted their heads against scientific fact since the beginning. For example, some early thinkers reasoned that the earth was round. The theologians said it was flat; the Scriptures proved it. Then Magellan circumnavigated the world. Even so, 200 years passed before the Church accepted the fact.

Copernicus said the earth followed an orbit around the sun, and Galileo proved him right. Again, the theologians trooped to do battle. They quoted from Ecclesiastes: "The earth standeth fast forever." Luther, Calvin and Wesley condemned Copernicus, but the Church dealt more harshly with Galileo, who was tortured, imprisoned and forced to recant.

Jefferson said, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." The search for truth will not be stopped, tyranny notwithstanding. More truth has been discovered during the last 50 years than in all history. In religion, for example, great new areas of learning have developed, providing new information and deeper insights for those whose minds are open.

Archaeology has greatly increased our understanding of the Judaic-Christian background. Psychology has broadened our understanding of man's need for religious experience. Depth studies of Scriptural text have enriched our understanding of the Bible. Study of other religions has helped us to appreciate the excellence of the Christian faith.

I agree with Harold Begbie, who said: "The Christian religion has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried." This is not to say that we Christians have cornered the market. We should accept the fact that many of our religious ideals were proclaimed by others before the New Testament was written. Many Judaic-Christian teachings were predated by concepts of the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Persians. We should not be upset by the fact that other religions have their own counterpart of our Christ. Nor should we go into a tailspin if future scientific research disproves some of our present religious concepts. We should seek truth, not fear it.

Our religious concepts have developed slowly. The God of the Hebrews walked in the cool of the garden. Later, he led them in war. Finally, the prophets saw Him as a God of Justice. But Christ felt God was love. Future truth will, let us hope, further enlarge our concept of Him. Only the archaic God is dead. The God of our times lives, and our concept of Him should expand as our knowledge increases.

Both Dr. Bales and I are sincere Christians, but we differ on a vital point. Eric Hoffer nails it in his book *The True Believer*: "When the frustrated congregate in a mass movement, the air is heavy-laden with suspicion. There is prying and spying, tense watching and a tense awareness of being watched. The surprising thing is that this pathological mistrust within the ranks leads not to dissension but to strict conformity. Knowing themselves continually watched, the faithful strive to escape suspicion by adhering zealously to prescribed behavior and opinion. Strict orthodoxy is as much the result of mutual suspicion as of ardent faith."

The free man does not need to look around to see who's watching when he faces truth and accepts facts. Truth suffers when men cannot speak freely.

Edwin Markum once wrote: “He drew a circle that shut me out-heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But love and I had the wit to win: we drew a circle that took him in.”

We’ll walk together, Dr. Bales—if not sooner, then beyond the pale. At that time we will gain new appreciation for the humility and the correctness of the apostle Paul when he said: “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall understand fully, even as I have been understood.” If we then know “all truth” perhaps that will be our greatest reward.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES TODAY

This I believe. The Holy Spirit is indeed in our lives today. The Bible tells us in plain language that we as Christians are in the Spirit and that the Spirit is in us. Praise the Lord! In *words* it is this way: “You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Rom. 8:9). In *personal experience* it is of course much more than any words can describe.

Walking by the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, praying in the Spirit, being helped in our weakness by the Spirit are far more than ideas upon a printed page, however precious those ideas may be. Think on what Paul is saying in Gal. 4:6: “Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” The apostle is saying that the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, and that from within us He cries to God on our behalf. Religion becomes an exciting venture to one who experiences such things. It isn’t that he has certain passages about the Spirit memorized by heart, but that he has a Person in his heart.

The Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today is not only a great idea that must become a precious reality to us if the body of Christ is to be renewed in our time, but it is the title of a new book just off the press, published by *Mission Messenger* and edited by W. Carl Ketcherside. It is a record of what was said at the Hartford (Illinois) Forum last Christmas on the Holy Spirit.

The book may imply more than it says, for “the unity of the Spirit” is wonderfully demonstrated in those who participated, coming as they do from such diverse backgrounds within discipledom. One is from the premill wing of Churches of Christ; another from the Independent Christian Church; another from the Disciples of Christ; another from the mainline Churches of Christ. At least one has had the experience of tongues, while others

are certain there is no such thing. Some are ministers of churches, others editors or teachers. So the forum itself, including the audience, was unity in diversity—the only kind of unity there is, of course.

The volume has those fine features we all like: concise (115 pages) , highly readable, a vital subject, and inexpensive (only 1.50).

I have an essay in the volume on "The Finger of God," which is an account of the Holy Spirit in history, a unique subject to say the least. Carl Ketcherside's "Revelation and Illumination" is enlightening and inspiring (as a lesson on *illumination* ought to be!), while Roy Key's "The Spirit and the Prayer Life" is deeply moving. Paul Eckstein's piece on "The Fruit of the Spirit" shows how the Spirit Himself is the cause of Christian virtues.

It is a handsome little volume, in joyful orange, black and white, and one that you could happily pass along to friends. Already I have distributed copies to professors and deans at the university where I work. It opens doors for conversation. *The Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today.* What a glorious subject! Send a check for as many as you want at 1.50 each, and we'll put them in the mail to you on the same day.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

BOOK NOTES

Many have been blessed by Wuest's helpful insights into the Greek, written for the one who doesn't understand Greek: *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament,* 3.25; *Untranslatable Riches,* 2.25; *Golden Nuggets, 1.45; Bypaths,* 225. These are excellent and highly informative.

Lovers of C. S. Lewis can now have *Christian Reflections,* published after his death. His case for the abolition of church music is provocative, and his reflections on ethics, culture, and prayer are enlightening. 3.95.

If you would like to read some stuff on how human nature is interpreted, a question that perplexes all of us, I recommend *Understandings of Man.* It states Huxley's humanistic view, Freud's psychological view, Kierkegaard's existential view, Buber on man in dialogue, Niebuhr on man as sinner, which is followed by the author's own Christian view. Perry LeFevre, the author, is a seminary professor. Here is a book that will leave you a better informed person. 2.45 in paperback.

We can supply back copies of this journal at 15 cents each or 8 for 1.00. We still have all the monthly issues, dating back to 1964 (32 numbers in all). Of the 20 numbers issued as a quarterly (1959-63) we still have half of these available at 3 for 1.00, 32 or 64 pages each.

Resources of Power, the bound volume of this journal for 1966, is available at only 3.00. It is permanent binding with gold-lettering and colorful dust jacket. The volume contains 200 pages, plus introduction and index.

The review of *Voices of Concern* will continue, with Pat Hardeman responding to J. D. Bales in the October number. You should have your own copy of the book, which we have available at 3.50. Why not renew your sub to *Restoration Review* while you are at it—and subscribe for a friend at the same time? Remember our club rate makes this easy—6 names for only 3.00. You have friends who would be stimulated by this journal, and we can use your support. Help us double our readership and thus enlarge our potential for good.

Ketcherside's *Mission Messenger* is now available in *seven* volumes, and we'll send them all for 22.00. Take five months to pay! You can add *The Millennial Harbinger Abridged*, a two volume set of the best of Campbell, for only 9.95, and still pay only 5.00 monthly.

Have you Cochran's *The Fool of God*, a historical novel about Alexander Campbell, and *Raccoon John Smith*, the story of the Kentucky evangelist? We have them in paperback for only 1.95 each. Buy *Christians Only* by James DeForest Murch, a history of the Restoration Movement, while you are at it; only 2.98.

Unger's *Bible Handbook* is packed with information about the Bible, a thousand pages of it, for 4.95. You'll be impressed.

Reserve now your copy of "Things That Matter Most," the bound volume of *Restoration Review* for 1967. Probable price: 3.00.

We can supply William Barclay's *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, an informative survey of the New Testament at 2.50; and Barclay's *The Promise of the Spirit* at 2.50. Anything by Barclay is worth the reading.

You may enter our Credit Plan and purchase our books at only 5.00 a month, or 10 % of the balance per month, whichever is greatest. For instance, we can let you have Hastings *Great Texts of the Bible,* all 21 volumes for the special price of 56.25, and your first monthly payment would be 5.62—and no carrying charges! You can add *The New Bible Dictionary, 12.95, The New Bible Commentary, 8.95, Wuest's Word Studies, 24.95,* Kittel's *Theological Dictionary,* with four volumes now available, at 22.50 each, or Barclay's 17-volume *Daily Bible Study* at 39.50. An easy payment plan for any or all of these, or for any book we advertise.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

RESPONSE FROM READERS

Let me commend you on your article, "Saved by Grace-And Only By Grace," for I agree wholeheartedly. I am not subscribing simply hoping to read what I already believe, but anticipate that future articles will stimulate my thinking . . . My views, which appear to be much like yours, have caused a rather "lonely" ministry here . . . *California*

I appreciate *Restoration Review* very much, and would like to reserve two copies of "Resources of Power." The article on angels was particularly meaningful. I felt that God had sent help to me in just such a way, as I had unbelievable strength the weeks following my husband's death. Then the question was asked—ministering angels or the Holy Spirit? —*a West Virginia Lutheran*

I feel that the church in . . . . . is doing fine and is getting fairly converted from selfish legalism to freedom in Christ.—*an elder in a Church of Christ*

In studying the practice of the early church and the New Testament scriptures, I conclude that our Minister System is about the same as the Pastor System of the denominations. Our preachers are really the pastors in the churches, while the elders should be the pastors. We have created a special class of college trained men and made a distinction between the minister and the laymen. Is this not the same as the denominational distinction between clergy and laity?—*Illinois*

The R*eview* is the only paper of the many I get that I sit down with and read every little morsel of truth. What a tasty dish!—*West Virginia*

(If he reads only the truth I am sure that many would say it should not take him very long! And maybe so.—*Ed*.)

The October issue promises to be exciting. Beside Pat Hardeman's response to Prof. Bales, we'll have Norman Parks writing on "Power Politics in Nashville" and the editor dealing with "What Makes Life Worth Living" as part of the *Things That Matter Most* series.

You can subscribe to *Restoration Review* for only 1.00 a year; in clubs of 6 or more, 50 cents each. Bound volumes: 3.00 each.

RESTORATION REVIEW, *1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly (except July and August) at 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas. Leroy Garrett, Editor. Second class permit at Denton, Texas. Subscription rate is $1.00 per annum; 50 cents in clubs of 6 or more.

Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas 76201.*